DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 311 505 CS 506 832

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TITLE News Photographs in Stories Related to Vietnam: A Content Analysis of Photographs Relating to the Vietnam War Appearing in "Life Magazine" from January 1, 1966 through February 28, 1970.
PUB DATE 27 Jun 89
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (72nd, Washington, DC, August 10-13, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Historical Materials (060)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Content Analysis; Foreign Countries; Layout (Publications); *Mass Media Role; Media Research; News Media; *News Reporting; *Nonprint Media; *Photographs; *Photojournalism
IDENTIFIERS Color Photography; Gatekeeper Role; *Life Magazine; Media Imagery; Vietnam; *Vietnam War

ABSTRACT

A study focused on the results of the gatekeeping process which determined the nature and quantity of images of the Vietnam War that the American public saw in "Life Magazine" before and after the Tet offensive of January 1968. The study examined the content of these photographs and looked for significant changes. In addition, the study examined the technological changes in photography which made color images practical for the first time in combat photography and the potential difference in impact of color versus black and white photographs. Content analysis looked at the nature of the photographic images in order to quantify them objectively and systematically on a number of variables. All issues of "Life" from January 7, 1966 to February 28, 1970 (200 issues in all) were examined. The almost total lack of any difference in the depiction of violence in pre-Tet and post-Tet photographs is striking. It was also discovered that "Life" ran the photographs slightly further back in the magazine after the Tet offensive. In looking at the nature of differences of photographs published, what is seen is the end result of a gatekeeping process. The interplay between the events in Vietnam, the reporting of those events by the media, the impact these reports had on the public and public opinion, the impact that public opinion had on public policy and the effects of shifts in public policy on the conduct of the Vietnam War needs to be studied further. (Twenty-six references are attached.) (MG)

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News Photographs in Stories Related to Vietnam: A Content Analysis of Photographs Relating to the Vietnam War Appearing in Life Magazine from January 1, 1966 through February 28, 1970.

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June 27, 1989

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This study focuses on the results of the gatekeeping process which determined the nature and quantity of images of the Vietnam War that the American public saw in Life Magazine before and after the Tet offensive of January 1968. The process by which photographers choose which scenes to photograph is essentially an initial step in controlling the flow of images published in Life. The editorial process in the U.S. could have had a gatekeeping function in choice of images published, cropping of the images and image captioning. The study examines the content of these photographs and examines that content for significant change. If a significant change took place after the Tet offensive in the images of Vietnam in Life, the change would tend to confirm the allegations that the press coverage of the Vietnam war was influenced by the Tet offensive. If a change took place it would be an example of the gatekeeping process in action. In addition, this study examines the technological changes in photography which made color images practical for the first time in combat photography and the potential difference in impact of color verses black and white photographs.

Much of the discussion of the news media and the Vietnam War has revolved around how the Tet offensive and the reporting of the Tet offensive may have produced the change observed in the climate of public opinion about the Vietnam War in the U.S..[21] The events revolving around this nation wide offensive are felt to have had many effects. It is seen as having definitive and sudden repercussions on the political situation in

America.[12] Optimism and patience regarding the American military position in Vietnam weakened substantially.[1]

This alleged shift in public opinion and political climate in the United States at the time of the Tet offensive is examined by William Lunch and Peter Sperlich.[19] They traced the trends in public opinion about the Vietnam war from late 1964 to late 1972, and found minor fluctuations at the time of the Tet offensive but no major shifts in direction of public opinion at that time. If the shift in public opinion argued by those in the media did not take place, a further question arises about whether or not the alleged changes in press coverage took place. Perhaps the perceived change in public opinion asserted by the press was just a perspective shift on the part of the press itself.

Despite the lack of evidence of U.S. public opinion being tied to the Tet offensive, the examination of the claimed change in reporting is necessary to clarify how the press was conducting the coverage of the Vietnam War. To some observers the juxtaposition of the discerned shift in public opinion after the Tet offensive and the intensive media coverage of the offensive may imply a cause and effect relationship of the two factors. However, there is little agreement on this point.

A basic set of assumptions underlie many of the discussions of the press coverage of the Vietnam War. The foundation of these suppositions is the media impact on U.S. public opinion and how public opinion in turn influenced the policies directing the course of the Vietnam War. At least some journalists must have felt they were in a position to sway public opinion, or books like David Douglas Duncan's I Protest! would not have been published.[6] Whether a direct overall influence of the news media on U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War existed, a considerable consensus developed about a shift in public opinion over the course of the war from support to opposition.[1,13] This shift is frequently seen as being very visible around the Tet Offensive, which started January 31, 1968.[16,20]

Much has been written and a great deal of controversy generated about how the mass media may or may not have influenced American involvement in Vietnam.[21,24] The vast majority of the discussion has revolved around what was reported in writing and orally on the electronic media. Little has been done to analyze the photographic (both still photographs and television) reporting, despite changes in the media that made the visual media take on new importance in reporting the Vietnam War.

Malcolm W. Browne, A.P. correspondent in Saigon in 1961, acknowledged the importance of the visual reporting of the Vietnam War:

> The Buddhists desperately needed the eyes of the world in support of their cause, and sought an appropriate eye catcher.

> The eye-catcher turned out to be an affable 73-year old monk named the Venerable Thich Quang Duc, a Buddhist school teacher. On June 11th, 1963, Quang Duc burned himself to death in the middle of a busy Saigon intersection, surrounded by 350 chanting, wailing, banner waving monks and nuns. The police were too stunned to do much about it.
>
> The Buddhist leaders were aware that a ghastly human sacrifice like Quang Duc's would be pointless unless the Western press--the only free press in the country--carried the word to the outside world.[4]

The impact of Browne's photograph was immense. Enlargements were subsequently used by the Buddhists to carry at the head of their processions. It was said to have been on President Kennedy's desk when he called Henry Cabot Lodge to the White House for a conference prior to Lodge assuming the post of ambassador to Vietnam. Life used it as a cover photo. Considering the potential differences in the impact of color verses black and white images, which will be examined later, there is serious doubt whether the photograph could have had the extensive emotional impact it had if it had been a black and white image.

The emotional impact of the color photography of the Vietnam war was more intense than the black and white photography of prior wars. More cognitive processing is involved in comprehending the black and white photographs of wars prior to Vietnam. This cognitive processing distracts from their emotional impact. If the change from black and white to color is important in processing the message of the image, then the added factor of

motion in the color television images would have still a greater impact on the processing of the viewers. These two factors alone are enough to have a substantial impact on the meaning the viewers assimilated from the images emanating from Vietnam. The rapidity with which the images could be brought to the American people also may have played a role in how the images were perceived by them.

These radical changes in the media are ignored. Charles Mohr, a New York Times reporter who covered the Vietnam War for four years, writes:

> Most wars literally, not merely photographically, go through people's living rooms. The truly awesome casualty lists of World War I, the London Blitz, the stark still photography of World War II have never seemed to me to be less psychologically important than the Vietnam TV coverage.[23]

The photographic coverage of Vietnam cannot be equated to any prior war photography. To make this claim of equality of color to black and white is to deny the technical changes and their effects on the people who saw the images. The processing of visual images is extremely dependant on the nature of the image. Research in the field of processing visual stimuli has pointed out that there are vast differences in how color and black and white images are processed.[10] Color images are processed more quickly and with less cognitive effort than black and white images. Color photographs are expected to require less mental effort than black-and-white photographs.[11] This would lead to less thought about the color image and more emotional reactions. The emotional reactions would be relatively suppressed when

viewing the black and white photographs due to the extra cognitive effort required to achieve object discrimination without the presence of color.[15]

The overall impact of visual reporting of the Vietnam War has been acknowledged in other studies. In their analysis of the summary execution of a suspected Viet Cong captive by South Vietnamese General Nguyen Noc Loan, George Bailey and Lawrence Lichty contended that the bloody footage of this execution had a great influence on American attitude toward the Vietnam War:

> That next day, February 2, 1968, would be the most sensational day of broadcast coverage in that sensational week of the Tet offensive, and to many observers the turning point in the American opinion and policy toward the Vietnam war.[2]

The major works dealing with the news media and the Vietnam War, Daniel Hallin's overview and Peter Braestrup's focus on the Tet offensive of 1968 as examples, define the nature of Vietnam reportage primarily in terms of the language used by the reporters.[14,3] The one exception was Hallin's examination of visual content for the civilian, ARVIN, PAVN(VC/NVA) and U.S. casualties in film reports. However, in this case, the author offers no definition of casualty and does not examine the figures for statistical significance.

At least one serious attempt at content analysis of a visual element in photographs of Vietnam has been undertaken. Oscar Peterson III looked at

whether photographs showed more "blood and gore" at the end of a period spanning August 5, 1968 (note: post-Tet) to August 15, 1973:

> Time utilized photographs of the dead or wounded in only 6.0% of its Vietnam-related stories, Newsweek in 9.3% of its coverage of Vietnam, and the pictorial magazine Life in 18.0% of its Vietnam stories. This leads to the conclusion, then, that the weekly news magazine coverage of the war in Vietnam for the period under analysis was not filled with pictorial proof of the "bloody business of war".[24]

This study states that from 1968 to 1973 fewer dead or wounded were depicted each year.

Yet his assessment could have been an artifact of the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam, and by itself is inconclusive. Moreover, considering the richness of the photographic image and the breadth of information the photographic image carries, the Peterson study leaves a vast wealth of potential work to be done in analyzing photographic reporting. Also, considering the pivotal nature in both public opinion in the U.S. about the Vietnam War and debate over coverage of the Tet offensive, the Peterson paper misses an opportunity to examine photographic reporting on a pre/Tet-post/Tet basis.

The pictures in Life from the period surrounding the Tet offensive can be viewed as the epitome of photographic coverage of the combat in Vietnam. They range from David Douglas Duncan's black and white coverage of Khe-Sahn to the color coverage of the Marine's assault on the dug-in NVA

and VC troops in Hue. Part of the nature of the photography of this phase of the war was due to the NVA/VC deciding to fight large unit battles with U.S. troops, making the combat more sustained and accessible to the photographers. The photographs of this period clearly conveyed the fighting and pain of the American soldier in Vietnam. However, these images did not necessarily have a negative effect on the public opinion at home, any more than Capa's, Smith's or Duncan's photos of World War II or Korean War combat did.

Some of what has passed for scholarship on photojournalism is lacking in scholarly endeavor. When Douglas Gallez lauds the photojournalists in Vietnam for their self restraint in deciding what to photograph, he at best exaggerates the case.[9] If Bailey and Lichty's well documented gatekeeping study of the on-camera execution of a Viet Cong is examined, the statement seems ludicrous rather than exaggerated.[2,9] Gallez goes on to conclude his article citing how indebted the public is to the photojournalists who faithfully record the "precious stuff of history" and are a "special breed." This is heartfelt and perhaps moving; but considering the almost total lack of documentation in the article it scarcely resembles scholarship. Most serious scholarship of photojournalism has not been directed at this critical period when the visual reporting media were undergoing radical technological change.[17]

There were significant changes in technical means of reporting and media themselves in the years between World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Technological innovation led to radical changes in the way visual reporting was carried out. The increase in the use of television as a news source took place between the Korean War and Vietnam.[5] At the end of the Korean War only 3% of the homes in the U.S. had television sets. NBC and CBS evening news went from 15 minutes to 30 minutes in 1963.[13] During the early news coverage of the Vietnam War in 1963, of the 91.3% homes having television only 1.9% had color sets.[26] The percent of color sets had risen to 24.2% in 1968 and 39.2% in 1970. Considering that the black and white news reel in the theater was the only source of motion images of World War II and the primary source of motion images of the Korean War, their replacement by color images in the home represents a radical difference in the media available to the American public.

The distribution system bringing the images via television was much more efficient than that of the movie reel. Part of this difference was the greater speed of air transportation between the Far East and the United States during the war in Vietnam than during the Korean War. The speed was increased even more radically when satellite transmission for video images became available during the Vietnam War. Even though satellite transmission was not frequently used due to the average $5000 per transmission cost, it was utilized during and immediately after the Tet offensive.[28]

Television also reduced the delay in bringing the news to the United States by eliminating the process of duplicating the film shot in the field and physically distributing the prints to the movie theaters. As a result, the delay between the event and the reporting was substantially reduced.

Color photography became increasingly practical for magazines during the Vietnam War. During World War II, color photography was in its infancy. Processes were tedious and subject to great technical restraints which made the process cumbersome and impractical for news photography. The only color film available to American journalists at the outset of World War II was Kodachrome.[22] This was a color slide film which was useless for photojournalism because of its lack of sensitivity to light (Weston speed rating of 8). Also, 35mm Kodachrome could only be processed by Eastman Kodak at laboratories in Rochester, N.Y., Los Angeles, London, Berlin and Paris. This situation was hardly conducive to use by photojournalists.[7]

Kodacolor and Ektachrome developed during World War II were not in wide distribution until after the end of the war. By the end of the Korean War color photography was still hampered by processing requirements and film of limited sensitivity to light, making it largely unsuitable for spot news coverage. In the early 1950s the processes for these new films were less complex than before, but were still subject to extremely stringent temperature control requirements, water quality requirements, chemical storage

conditions and an overall extremely complex developing process. In 1957 Eastman Kodak introduced a new Ektachrome process which did not demand a sophisticated processing environment. By the early 1960s Kodacolor and Ektachrome films and their processes were again improved to make more light sensitive color films available and field processing more practical. Still color photographs were now practical for spot news coverage. Even with these improvements in still photography, Bailey and Lichty note that the news film shot in Vietnam was flown for processing by the one motion picture color processing lab in Tokyo, the site of the nearest satellite transmitter.[2]

METHOD

Content of the message is central to any communication process. For the purposes of this study, content was defined as the photographic images which in any way dealt with the Vietnam War in Life Magazine from January 7, 1966 to February 28, 1970.[18] Content analysis in this context looked at the nature of the photographic images in order to quantify them objectively and systematically on a number of variables. This variable set is by no means exhaustive or exclusive. In fact, it may well be that this set of variables is merely a preliminary analysis of the vast array of potential visual, photographic, variables which could have been chosen.

Life was selected because of its long leadership in photojournalism and enormous popularity. In 1969 it had a circulation of 8.9 million.[25] The time frame surrounding the Tet offensive was extended to allow for the greatest sensitivity to change in the content of the photographs. All issues of Life were examined, rather than sampling randomly, because articles concerning Vietnam appeared very irregularly. There were periods of up to two months (7/15/66 to 8/12/66) in which no photographs related to the Vietnam War appeared in Life. On the other hand, one issue contained 217 photographs, an anomaly that will be discussed later. The remaining issues ranged from one photograph to thirty four.

The examination of Life for the period surrounding Tet was exhaustive. The number of pre-Tet issues and post-Tet issues were balanced to simplify statistical analysis. The 200 actual magazines were examined, as several factors depended on information that was missing from or difficult to access on microfilm. Color had to be determined from the original magazine, and the size of the photograph was much more readily ascertained from the original. After the magazines were examined, missing or mutilated issues were inspected on microfilm. The few instances of absent or mutilated issues containing photographs related to the Vietnam War were located and reviewed in alternative collections.

The photographs dealing with the Vietnam War were coded for the following variables: day, month, and year of publication, whether the date was pre-Tet or post-Tet, page where the photograph appeared, size of the photograph as a percentage of page size, whether the photograph was in color or black and white, whether the photograph was taken in the war zone (Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand or the waters off these countries) or not in the war zone, how many military individuals were in the photograph (scored from 0 to a maximum of 50: groups over 50 were scored as 50), how many civilians were in the photograph, whether the situation was noncombat, potential combat or active combat, number of allied (U.S., ARVIN, Local Self Defense Forces, and other allies) wounded in the photograph, number of NVA/VC wounded in the photograph, number of civilian wounded in the photograph, whether the photograph was serious or humorous, if firing by the allies (outgoing or impact) was visible, if firing by the NVA/VC (outgoing or impact) was visible, if allied troops were present were they under NVA/VC fire, if NVA/VC were present were they under allied fire, if civilians were present were they under fire, visible allied dead (bodies or full body bags) (yes/no), visible NVA/VC dead (yes/no), visible civilian dead (yes/no), if identifiable people were visible in the photograph and the general tenor of the photograph.

The last item was rated on the following scale:

1=friendly=smiling, hand shaking and the like

2=neutral

4=implied hostility=weapons visible but not pointed, old battle damage etc.

6=overt hostility=pointed weapons, wounded or dead, firing of weapons etc.

In coding this category there was one case where the photograph was clearly in two categories. The photo was of a Vietnamese boy and a U.S. Marine walking together with fishing poles. The Marine was also carrying his M-14. This case was coded as neutral. A compromise but the only conspicuous case of a coding conflict in a category which was open to question at the start of the coding process.

A second problem was presented by the June 27, 1969, issue. In this issue an article running several pages showed photographs of 217 of the servicemen listed as killed in action in a week in early June. All of these photographs were identical in the following respects: from the same issue, black and white, not identifiable as being photographed in the war zone, same size, same number of military personnel visible, no civilians, not in combat, no wounded, no dead bodies, no firing, not under fire, people visible in photograph and being assigned the category of neutral. A block of 217 identical photographs in a data set of 1105 photographs was seen as potentially affecting the results of the data analysis. To answer this question a second data set of 888 photographs was created by removing the 217 items in question. Both data sets were then identically analyzed with a series

of T tests and the results were compared. This preliminary analysis showed several serious distortions of the data by the set of 217 identical photographs. The 888 item data set was used for all subsequent analyses.

In verification of 50 randomly selected photographs there were only 2 differences in coding among the 25 variables coded. One photograph was coded 3% different in size and one photograph was coded friendly on recoding and neutral on initial coding.

RESULTS

In examining the data, the primary question was whether there were differences in the coded variables before and after the Tet offensive. The preliminary T tests yielded significant pre-Tet post-Tet differences on these variables: page, location, combat, seriousness, VC/NVA dead, civilian dead, visable people and tenor. Regression was used to examine the relative contribution made by these variables to the total change between pre-Tet and post-Tet photographs. Regression was also employed because it is more sensitive to spurious significance in data sets of this size. The figure in the column "Change in R^2" indicates how much the variable in that row contributed to the overall difference being examined. As an example, in the first regression the variable "combat" contributed 34.16% of the variability found in the "tenor" catagory. The variable "Allies under fire" contributed 4.69% of

the variability found in tenor.

The first regression was a stepwise regression of all variables on the category of "tenor." This was done to determine if the various factors thought to contribute to visible violence did indeed contribute to the overall perception of the photograph on a scale of overt hostility to friendliness.

SUMMARY TABLE FOR STEPWISE REGRESSION
WITH TENOR AS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

STEP	VARIABLE	MULTIPLE R^2	CHANGE IN R^2	F TO ENTER
1	Combat	.3416	.3416	459.6
2	Allies under fire	.3885	.0469	67.9
3	Allies firing	.4270	.0385	59.44
4	Civilian dead	.4425	.0182	28.49
5	Allies wounded	.4646	.0194	31.91
6	VC/NVA firing	.4809	.0163	27.65
7	Allied dead	.4897	.0088	15.20
8	Page	.4988	.0091	15.99
9	Location	.5068	.0080	14.23
10	Civilians wounded	.5125	.0057	10.31
11	VC/NVA wounded	.5164	.0039	7.02
	REMAINING ITEMS DO NOT REACH A SIGNIFICANT F at P<.01			
12	VC/NVA dead	.5193	.0029	5.32
13	Size of photograph	.5215	.0022	4.04
14	Number of civilians	.5238	.0023	4.18

The overwhelming presence of the expected variables confirms the contribution of these variables to the perceived nature of individual images. The inclusion of location, page and size of photograph as significant to tenor will be considered in later regressions.

Further stepwise regressions were attempted but no variable except "year" accounted for more than .75% of the variance with Tet as the dependent variable. Understandably, the year of publication accounted for 70.6% of the variation found between photographs before and after Tet. The remainder of the analyses used hierarchial regressions. To examine the whole set of variables a regression was run using the original order of the variables in the data set. In this analysis "Tet" was the dependent variable and "year" was used as a covariate to eliminate its effects. The variables page, size, color, location and civilians under fire were significant at the $p<.01$ level. However, none of the variables account for 1% of the variance with "year" as a covariate. "Page" represented .75% of the variation in photographs before and after the Tet offensive with size accounting for .3%, color .28%, location .86% and civilians under fire .15%. These minuscule amounts of variation reached statistical significance only due to the sample size of 888. The statistical significance clearly does not represent causal significance in view of the infinitesimal proportion of the variance represented.

The entry of color as a significant variable is very possibly an artifact of the change in technology previously mentioned and the commercial value of that technology in the context of reporting the Vietnam War. The competition of the various news media for representative images of the war in Vietnam coupled with the improvements in color photography technology made color images more available. With less than 1% of the variation in Tet

accounted for by color, and considering the change in the nature of color photography just prior to and during this time, this significance is probably spurious.

The significance of location is probably also better explained by other factors. After the Tet offensive, several locations outside the war zone appeared much more frequently in Life photographs, including the Paris peace talks, the "folks at home" (relatives of people serving in Vietnam) and anti-war activities. It was the coverage of these facets related to the war in Vietnam which contributed to the significance of this measure. Moreover, the direction of the shift in location is away from the coverage of the fighting and to generally less violent photographic depictions. This is counter to the assumption that the media depicted the war as more brutal after Tet.

Although it represents a small effect in terms of contribution to the overall variation differences between photos before and after Tet, the change in "page" is interesting. The study indicates that photographs concerning the Vietnam War were moved further toward the back of Life after the Tet offensive. The change in "size" is similarly small but intriguing. Generally photos in Life relevant to the Vietnam War were larger after the Tet offensive than before the Tet offensive. The only other variable to attain significance was "civilians under fire." The post-Tet period saw a small increase in the depiction of civilians under fire. This may be the only content vari-

able which truly changed in the photographs in Life after the Tet offensive. Even this change is so small that its actual significance is dubious.

In the next regression analysis, Tet is again the dependent variable and year is used as a covariate. However, the independent variables are reordered to allow the firing, under fire and other variables directly depicting violence to enter the equation first. If there is any change in the depiction of violence before and after the Tet offensive in the photographs in Life, this analysis ought to be sufficiently sensitive to detect them. The results here are generally the same. Combat is the only other variable to reach significance after calculating covariance. The surprise here is that combat is negatively correlated with Tet. Considering the coding used, this means that there was less potential and actual combat shown in Life photographs after the Tet offensive. This is most likely an artifact of the larger number of photographs taken outside the combat zone after the Tet offensive or the diminished coverage of combat with the Vietnamization of the War.

Considering the effect of location, combat zone vs. non-combat zone, observed in the initial regression, it was decided to examine several of the variables directly measuring violence using Tet as the dependent measure and location as a covariate. In examining the categories of visible dead VC/NVA and civilian dead are statistically significant. However, these categories contribute only 1.12% and 1.71% to the total variance in photo-

graphs taken before and after Tet. Again, this may be partially an artifact of the conduct of the war during and after the Tet offensive.

During the Tet offensive the VC/NVA fought conventional battles. It is much easier to photograph enemy bodies than when guerilla tactics, which emphasise hit and run, are used. The use of guerilla tactics usually lowers the casualty rate among the attacking forces and makes seeing and photographing enemy bodies much more unlikely. Also, in the guerilla battles in Vietnam, the NVA/VC attempted to remove all bodies and wounded when they retreated.

Additionally, the conventional battles fought during and after Tet produced more visible civilian dead because of the concentration of sustained fighting in more urban areas. Photographs of civilian dead also came from the exhuming of the civilians assassinated by the VC/NVA during the Tet offensive, as well as the attack on civilians at My Lai. Considering these circumstances, these variables which contribute 1.1% and 1.7% to the total variation in photographs before and after Tet, look less than convincingly important.

Using the visible wounded measures as the independent variables with Tet as the dependent variable and location as a covariate, none of the "wounded" variables accounted for even 1% of the total change in photo-

graphs taken before and after Tet. Considering the wounded categories are among some of the most poignant and bloody photographs of the Vietnam War, this appears to indicate no difference between pre-Tet and post-Tet photographs in terms of "blood and guts."

Using the visible firing measures as the independent variables with Tet as the dependent variable and location as a covariate, the "firing" variables only accounted for .07% and .03% of the total change in photographs before and after Tet. The visibility of overt violence as depicted by firing weapons certainly was not different before and after the Tet offensive.

Using the under fire measures as the independent variables with Tet as the dependent variable and location as a covariate, each of the "under fire" variables only accounted for less than 1% of the total shift present in photographs before and after Tet. Allies under fire and VC/NVA under fire reaching significance may again be an artifact of the much higher visibility of the fighting during the Tet offensive and in the period after Tet. As observed earlier, guerilla conflict is much more difficult to photograph than conventional battles. With this in mind, the size of the contribution of these variables indicates little change in photographic coverage of the Vietnam War in Life before and after the Tet offensive.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The almost total lack of any difference in the depiction of violence in pre-Tet and post-Tet photographs in Life is striking. Reasons for the differences which were found may not lie in assumptions which have been previously made about reporting the Vietnam War. The significant shift of the location of the photograph, combat conditions of the photograph, and the overall tenor of the photographs after the Tet offensive could be partially be explained by the following factors. There was significantly more coverage of the "home front" and the people related to soldiers affected by the war after Tet. The protest movement in the U.S. also falls into this realm of "home front" coverage, and did receive more coverage after Tet. The peace process in Paris became more visible and took coverage away from the battlefield and its attendant conditions.

Reasons like these cannot however explain the remaining variables which were significantly different before and after Tet. Why, after Tet, did Life run the photographs slightly further back in the magazine? Perhaps it was a change in layout and space allocation deemphasizing photographs which moved most photo stories toward the back of the magazine a bit. On the other hand it could have been an editorial policy change. A change in editorial policy at Life would have been directly parallel to the editorial

change in the television networks described by Edward Epstein.[8] Still another hypothesis could be that the editorial staff became psychologically uncomfortable with keeping the Vietnam War up in the front of the magazine. Perhaps this discomfort may ahve been a shred of the remnant of the shared value system that the Vietnam era helped destroy. As part of a shared value system the press would tend to minimize news unfavorable to the government. Any of these reasons could have a bearing on the shift in average page location of Vietnam-relevant photographs.

In looking at nature of the differences of photographs published in Life before and after the Tet offensive, what is seen is the end result of a gatekeeping process. As previously stated, this process is a combination of both the photographers in Vietnam and the editors in the U.S. One point to be aware of in this context, is that the control of the published product in the case of photographs is less in the hands of editors than in the case of the written word. To be sure, an editor can refuse to use any given photograph and thereby exercise control over the publication. On the other side of the situation, unless the photographer takes the photograph in the first place, the editor has nothing with which to work.

There is only a very limited amount of modification considered ethical in journalism relative to photographs. Some changes can be made in an image consisting primarily in removing information by cropping. This does

not give the editor flexibility in modifying photographs in the same way a good rewrite can modify the written story by adding information or deleting important material altering the impact and essence of the story. An editor probably has the biggest impact on the message of the news photograph in the caption. In this sense and if examined alone, the photograph probably will, by the virtue of being less malleable than the written report, be transmitted to the public in a form closer to the creator's intent than the written word.

The increased frequency of depiction of VC/NVA dead after the Tet offensive could be the function of several forces at work. Most simply, the nature of the war may have furnished more opportunities for these images after Tet. Again, the photographers or editors may have started choosing to take and use more of these images. The same factors and more may have led to the increased use of photographs of civilian dead after the Tet offensive. Considering these variables respectively only contributed 1.1% and 1.7% to the differences between pre-Tet and post-Tet photographs in Life, the alternate explanations offered would seem capable of accounting for the observed changes.

The interplay between the events in Vietnam, the reporting of those events by the media, the impact these reports had on the public and public opinion in the U.S., the impact that the public and public opinion had on

public policy and the effects of shifts in public policy on the conduct of the Vietnam War is not only a complex and convoluted set of circumstances but one which very much needs to be studied further. The rapid changes in the media and in the media's role in our society in the last 30 years is very minimally understood. The changing nature of the media and its relationships to the other major elements in society may be discernable in it's functions in critical situations which are pivotal for our society.

Considering the depth of trauma the Vietnam era left on the U.S., this period probably would qualify as a pivotal period of history. The inspection of photographic reporting of this period could potentially be of use to future journalists, considering that photojournalism offers the unique quality of limited malleability in the editorial process. In this context, it would be interesting to investigate the negative files of major visual sources, both corporate and private, to determine the types of images that were made, transmitted to the U.S. and ultimately used. Contrasting the editing at all stages would be most informative. In addition, interviewing the surviving photojournalists of the Vietnam War could serve as another source of insight into the process by which news photos are chosen.

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